

LONG

NSC BRIEFING

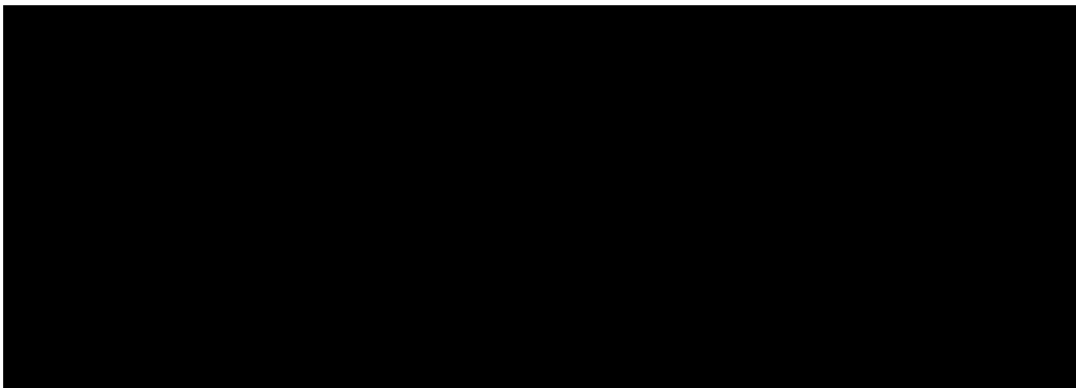
~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ 11 September 1957

SOVIET LEADERSHIP

- I. Case of "anti-party group" in the Soviet Union seems anything but closed. However, fate of each member of the opposition apparently being considered separately.
 - A. Thus Molotov's appointment as Ambassador to Mongolia doesn't necessarily mean that Malenkov, Kaganovich, Shepilov will fare as well.
 - B. At this point, Malenkov--as Khrushchev's leading rival--is facing the brunt of the attack.
 1. In a recently published speech, Khrushchev characterized Malenkov as Beria's "shadow and tool" who "very skillfully" incited the ageing Stalin to take action which was deserving of "stern condemnation." This, of course, is only a short step from accusing him of responsibility for some of Stalin's worst excesses.

2.

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- II. Drastic action against Malenkov or other members of the opposition would not appear to be in Khrushchev's best interest.

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- A. It would knock the props from under Khrushchev's campaign platform of de-Stalinization.
- B. Old fashioned punitive measures could also touch off a wave of terror that might be impossible to control.
- C. His economic program would undoubtedly be severely jeopardized.

III. A Stalinist type purge, then, if it materialized, would probably mean that Khrushchev is leading from weakness.

- A. He might need to create a new wave of popular indignation against the "opposition."

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- 1. [REDACTED] such a move may become necessary because many Soviet citizens seem depressed, cynical and distrustful of the present party leaders.

- B. He might also fear that Malenkov, in particular, may become a rallying point for new opponents in the future.

IV. All in all, Khrushchev seems in uncomfortable position.

- A. If he attacks opposition for complicity in the purges of the thirties, he will not be able to hide his own dirty hands.
- B. However, army may be pressuring him to set the record straight on the purge era. A few purged army leaders have been rehabilitated recently (Tukhachevsky, Bluecher).

V. These problems may come to a head soon.

- A. [REDACTED] another Central Committee plenum may convene soon.

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B.

[REDACTED]

Bulganin

(who reportedly became linked with the opposition) is about to be dropped as Premier and that Mikoyan is considered the most likely candidate to take his place.

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